



# FORT MCKAY

FIRST NATION

## Media statement

### **Fort McKay First Nation Land Code officially certified**

*Next steps reflect commitment to developing responsible land management*

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FORT MCKAY, AB / Feb. 16, 2023 — The Fort McKay First Nation (FMFN) has announced that, for the first time in 150 years, it will have control over decision making on its reserve land.

The Fort McKay First Nation Land Code will come into effect on March 1, 2023. A Band Council Resolution officially accepting the verification of official documents was passed earlier this week at a meeting of FMFN Chief and Council. A community-wide land code vote saw 86 per cent of participating voters in favour of adopting a land code.

“This is a truly historic event for our Nation,” said Chief Mel Grandjamb. “We saw a tremendous turnout of members who overwhelmingly supported this vote in favour of our Nation’s future. We are united and we are one.”

Over the past two years, the Nation developed its own Land Code overseen by a committee of FMFN members. A legal agreement transferring responsibility from Indigenous Services Canada to Fort McKay First Nation was also voted on and approved as part of the process.

“In agreeing to take control of our own lands, our community has taken a major step towards our Nation’s self-determination and ongoing prosperity,” said Chief Grandjamb. “We are well positioned to implement our Land Code, setting the stage in a positive way for generations to come.”

Adopting a Land Code means:

- All decisions made regarding development of FMFN’s land and resources will be made locally with input from band members. The Government of Canada will no longer have a role in these decisions.



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- FMFN will have control over law-making as it applies to its reserve lands. This will strengthen the Nation's ability to protect and conserve its land and environment in a culturally appropriate way. It also means that FMFN will have the ability to prosecute polluters and those who break First Nation laws enacted under the authority of the Land Code.
- Having control over land and resources also means that FMFN is in a better position to respond to business opportunities on reserve as they arise, rather than waiting for Canada to go through its Indian Act approval process, which can add years to the development of a project.

Adopting a Land Code does not impact the Nation's status as an Indian reserve set aside for the collective use and benefit of FMFN band members. His Majesty the King retains title to the land, as federal Crown land. This means Fort McKay reserve land may never be sold or surrendered and will be protected for generations to come.

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**About FMFN:**

Fort McKay First Nation has nearly 900 band members of Cree and Dene heritage, with approximately 450 living in the on-reserve section of the community of Fort McKay, located 60 kilometres north of Fort McMurray, on the shores of the Athabasca River. In addition to the Fort McKay community, FMFN has reserves 174A at Gardiner (Moose) Lake and 174B at Namur (Buffalo) Lake, approximately 65 kilometres northwest of Fort McKay. Moose Lake is the traditional home of what is now the Fort McKay First Nation.

A signatory to Treaty 8, Fort McKay First Nation's mission is to assert Treaty rights, revitalize culture and language, promote education, build economic capacity, and support wellness to create opportunities for our Nation's healthy and sustainable future.

The Nation also manages a business portfolio of 14 entities. Business revenues are invested in infrastructure, programs, services, and directly benefit both the community of Fort McKay and individual band members. Only five to 10 per cent of FMFN's annual operating budget comes from federal or provincial governments.

For more information about Fort McKay First Nation, visit our website at [www.fortmckay.com](http://www.fortmckay.com), or follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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